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### Sign up for MAC's eNews

Between the bi-monthly issues of the *State of the Arts*, our staff publishes four separate e-newsletters with opportunities and information:

- Artists' email newsletter
- Arts Educators' email newsletter
- Arts Organizations' email newsletter
- Public Artists' email newsletter

Our eNews contain information that has deadlines that are too short to make the *State of the Arts*. If you'd like to sign-up for one or more of these, please offer us your contact information and what you'd like to receive at: [art.mt.gov/resources/resources\\_soasubscribe.asp](mailto:art.mt.gov/resources/resources_soasubscribe.asp) or send us an email at: [mac@mt.gov](mailto:mac@mt.gov).

## ARNI'S ADDENDUM

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### Transitions: *Thank you Jonathan!*

There never seems to be a let-up in the transition news the Montana Arts Council hears about changing leadership among Montana's arts organizations. We work with and fund these organizations, and the relationships developed over the years has made our agency stronger for the learning we have undergone with them and the expertise the agency has shared with new directors through thick and thin.

Last week, I received news about a transition on the national level that I want to bring to your attention. Posted below is the email I received from Jonathan Katz, CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), which is the national service organization for the nation's state arts councils, located in Washington, DC.

I would like to tell everyone in Montana how important Jonathan has been to all of us involved in the arts in Montana – whether your involvement is as an artist or an arts educator or being part of an arts organization.

During my first week on this job in November 1992, I received a letter from Jonathan welcoming me to this position. His was a familiar name to me. During the time I spent with the Houston Grand Opera's touring division, Texas Opera Theater, in 1977-'78, Jonathan was the executive director of the Kansas Arts Commission. Texas Opera toured the western half of the country, and so Jonathan provided me with great resources for booking the company with presenters in Kansas.

It's always so fun to have that full-circle connection made, and his letter was one of the most welcoming gestures I received when I stepped into these new shoes in Helena, having moved back home to Montana in 1990.

Through NASAA, Jonathan created a national service organization that has been incredibly important to the survival and thriving of state arts agencies across the country. He has on board an amazing staff that has been invaluable to us in so many instances, some of which

I'll mention below.

He has built a structure within the organization that allows it to be nimble and responsive, helpful and invaluable, visionary and protective. It is an organization that serves us continually as a leadership-training ground, where we learn best practices and trends, and are continually inspired, renewed and refreshed while operating in what can be a highly fractious and stressful political environment.

One of the resources that has been enormously valuable to Montana is in the area of strategic planning. NASAA has a great website section on planning, which readers who are involved in this work may find helpful, at

[www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Planning-and-Accountability/Strategic-Planning-Resource-Center/index.php](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Planning-and-Accountability/Strategic-Planning-Resource-Center/index.php).

During times when the arts council was under political attack to eliminate, privatize or consolidate our agency, the NASAA staff provided remarkable assistance in how to approach these challenges. Because they have a bead on every single state in the country, they have a wealth of knowledge and tools other states have used successfully in similar situations. I can't tell you how many times Carleen Layne, our accountant, or I would call them with some emergency, and we'd have the answer immediately!

In essence, Jonathan built this national service organization into one in which his staff could serve as our ancillary staff for specific needs. This was not only true for emergency interventions, but for all the research NASAA has conducted and shared with us.

Jonathan also was a stalwart advocate for bipartisan support for federal funding of state arts agencies. Unlike some of the other national arts service organizations, which sometimes have a leaning toward one political perspective, Jonathan led NASAA in such a way that we always knew that our work had to have the support of

all political parties, regardless of their agendas on other issue fronts.

This is especially critical when it comes to funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the portion of their budget that goes to state arts agencies. Forty percent of the NEA's program budget goes to state arts agencies, and Montana is very reliant on this funding as it provides about half of our annual budget, which we use for all the programs offered by the agency. In fact, *State of the Arts* is funded primarily through this appropriation from the NEA.

Because I had the high honor of serving as the president of NASAA's Board of Directors during the last two years, I had the privilege of working very closely with Jonathan on all the issues impacting the NEA and facing state arts councils. I have learned so much from him, the board of directors and the staff ... lessons that have helped advance the mission of the Montana Arts Council and ensure that we're continually working to prove our public merit and be in touch with, and firmly connected to, the people we serve.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jonathan on behalf all of us in Big Sky Country for the support he has given to us throughout the years, his tireless commitment to improving our situation and inspiring us to be the best we can possibly be.

I hope *State of the Arts* readers will join me in showing how expansive our appreciation is from us all in the Last Best Place. His email is [jonathan.katz@nasaa-arts.org](mailto:jonathan.katz@nasaa-arts.org).

### Jonathan Katz: Taking stock and looking ahead

As I celebrate my 29th year as NASAA's CEO, I'm writing to share with you that I plan to end my tenure as NASAA's CEO at Assembly 2014 in New Orleans this November.

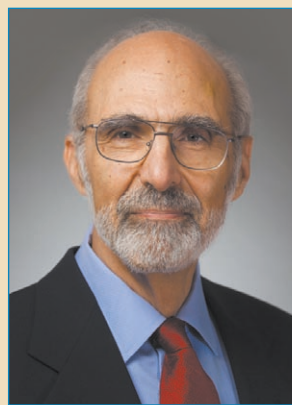
It has been my great privilege to serve as your CEO during the last three decades – a period of many transformations in the arts, among state arts agencies and at NASAA. Working with you gives me enormous personal pleasure and profound professional satisfaction – so much so that I've effortlessly postponed putting more energy into what has now become a demanding writing agenda.

Also, my enjoyment of leadership development and strategic planning has never stopped growing. I'd like to invest more time and creativity in those pursuits in the future.

In the meantime, I am committed to working with NASAA's elected leaders and staff to maintain progress and ensure a smooth transition. NASAA's governance is strong; its staff – as well you know – is amazingly capable, productive and adaptable; and its members are smart, creative, resilient leaders. The occasion to take stock, look ahead and select the CEO who, with your support, will lead NASAA to its next level of accomplishment represents a wonderful opportunity. As I look ahead to new opportunities for myself, I look ahead to the new opportunities for NASAA that my successor will bring.

I have much to be thankful for and more of you to thank than I will be able to reach on any single occasion. So please forgive me if I thank you more than once. Beginning now, and through the NASAA annual gathering in New Orleans this fall, I hope I can express to you how grateful I am for the many gifts that are mine and Terri's because of your personal and professional support.

With great affection and appreciation,



Jonathan Katz (Photo by Matthew Rakola)

Jonathan

### Helen Elliott (from page 1)

Church. The church was most gracious, and several concerts were held there.

In 2001 another great opportunity presented itself: a chance to purchase the derelict and closed Orpheum Theatre. Again, a miracle. PAC was able to raise the funds and purchased the building and put on a new roof.

To remodel the wreck, PAC was able to obtain a grant from the Wiegand Foundation of Reno. After "sweat and tears" and a huge campaign, the Orpheum reopened to movies and concerts. Subsequently, the grand piano has taken up home at the Orpheum.

Then, 10 years later, another \$65,000 was raised to get into the digital age so Conrad could continue to show movies.

Elliott cannot begin to show her undying gratitude to all the workers and visionaries, from the beginning to now, who have helped keep the arts alive in Conrad. "My sincere appreciation to this wonderful community that has supported the activities of the PAC over the years. The Orpheum wouldn't exist without you," she said.

But Elliott isn't done. She still plans to "hang in there" as chairman of the Concert Committee. She wants to bring a variety of entertainment to Conrad and expand the movie and concert audience.

New ideas for the PAC include an addition to the Orpheum to provide much-needed dressing rooms and restrooms for performers. The question she poses, "Is Conrad strong enough to support the arts with this future project?"

Elliott's dream is that each Conrad resident comes to at least one movie and one concert in 2014. If that would happen, according to her, "It would be beyond my wildest dreams!"



Helen Elliott's beloved Orpheum Theatre

### STATE OF THE ARTS

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*State of the Arts* welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

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